

We claim:

1        1. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2        100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices, for use  
3        in the manufacturing of commercial and military semiconductor  
4        devices used in phased array radar, missile seeking devices,  
5        direct broadcast satellite television receivers, wide band  
6        wireless systems, global positioning satellite receivers and  
7        cellular telephones, and other equipment said method comprising  
8        the steps of:

9                providing for the use and development of horizontal  
10        beams from a synchrotron or point source of x-ray beams;

11                preparing of submicrometer, transverse horizontal and  
12        vertical stepper stages and frames;

13                providing a stepper base frame for the proper housing  
14        and mating of the x-ray beam;

15                minimizing the effects of temperature and airflow  
16        control by means of an environmental chamber;

17                transporting, handling and prealigning wafers and  
18        other similar items for tight process control;

19                improving the control and sensing of positional  
20        accuracy through the use of differential variable reluctance  
21        transducers;

22                controlling the continuous gap and all six degrees of  
23        freedom of the wafer being treated with a multiple variable stage  
24        control;

25                incorporating alignment systems using unambiguous  
26        targets to provide data to align one level to the next;

27                using beam transport, shaping or shaping devices to  
28        include x-ray point sources;

1                   2. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2                   100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3                   according to claim 1, wherein:

4                   said using and developing of horizontal beams from a  
5   synchrotron or point source of x-ray beams step comprises the use  
6   of a beamline in parallel with the z axis.

1                   3. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2                   100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3                   according to claim 1, wherein:

7                   said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
8   horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further  
9   comprises providing a air or gaseous bearing;

10                   said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
11                   horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further  
12                   comprises providing vacuum clamping and mating surfaces;

13                   said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
14                   horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further  
15                   comprises providing active weight compensation;

19                           said preparing of submicrometer, transverse  
20                           horizontal and vertical stepper stages and frames step further

21 comprises a fine alignment flexure stage of transverse horizontal  
22 and vertical nanometer stages.

1           4. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2        100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3        according to claim 3, wherein:

4 said providing a light weight, honeycomb structure  
5 step comprises the use of at least one composite material.

1                   5. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2                   100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3                   according to claim 1, wherein:

1 6. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2 100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3 according to claim 1, wherein:

4 said minimizing the effects of temperature and  
5 airflow control by means of an environmental chamber step  
6 comprises controlling the temperature and humidity; and

1           7. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2        100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3        according to claim 1, wherein:

1                   8. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2   100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3   according to claim 1, wherein:

4                   said improving the control and sensing of positional  
5   accuracy through the use of differential variable reluctance  
6   transducers step comprises providing positional feedback of the  
7   six degrees of freedom alignment stage.

1                   9. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2   100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3   according to claim 1, wherein:

4                   said controlling the continuous gap and all six  
5   degrees of freedom of the wafer being treated with a multiple  
6   variable stage control step comprises using a device having a  
7   cross coupled gantry design.

1                   10. A method of improving x-ray lithography in the sub  
2   100nm range to create high quality semiconductor devices,  
3   according to claim 1, wherein:

4                   said incorporating alignment systems using  
5   unambiguous targets to provide data to align one level to the  
6   next level step comprises using multiple bright field optical  
7   microscopes in order to provide x, y and z, magnification and  
8   rotational data; and

9                   said incorporating alignment systems using  
10   unambiguous targets to provide data to align one level to the  
11   next level step further comprises using an additional imaging  
12   broad band interferometer alignment system for providing precise  
13   alignment of wafer levels and gap controls during x-ray exposure  
14   and imaging.